

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The Examiner objected to Figs. 1-4 as including areas of solid black and areas of shading that hinder legibility. Applicants have amended the figures to improve legibility and respectfully request entry of the enclosed drawings.

Attachment: Two replacement drawing sheets.

REMARKS

Information Disclosure Statement

The Examiner has cited the failure to provide a legible copy of Patent No. DE 74 11 413 U with the Information Disclosure Statement. Applicants' records indicate that a copy of this document was sent on March 26, 2004. For the Examiner's convenience, a duplicate copy is enclosed herewith.

Objections to the Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.84(m) as including areas of solid black and areas of shading that hinder legibility. Applicants have provided replacement Figures 1-4 to improve legibility. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objections to the drawings.

Claim Status

Claims 1-7 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 1 and 4-7 are currently amended and Claims 2-3 remain unchanged.

Claim Objection

The Examiner objected to Claim 5 because of informalities. Applicants have amended Claim 5 to correct the informality and respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

Claim Rejections 35 USC § 112

Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because of a lack of antecedent basis. Applicants have amended claims 5-7 to provide proper antecedent basis and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 5-7.

Claim Rejections 35 USC § 103

Independent Claim 1

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,423,608 (Funaki) in view of United States Patent No. 4,610,587 (Wollar '587) and United States Patent No. 5,129,768 (Hoyle).

Independent Claim 1 recites, among other things, "at least one holding pin for attaching said rear surround to the body of the household appliance, said holding pin having a slotted-link section with a substantially rectangular cross section configured to pass through said elongated hole in said rear surround, and said holding pin having a shank formed as a continuation of said slotted-link section, said shank forming a dowel having a constant diameter larger than a width of the elongated hole and a slot therethrough, said rectangular cross section being smaller than a diameter of said dowel."

Funaki teaches a washing apparatus 10 including a cover 78 having a backboard 86. *Funaki*, col. 3, lines 57-66. As the Examiner states on page 4 of the Office action, Funaki does not teach "a holding pin with a slotted-link section."

Wollar '587 does not cure the deficiencies of Funaki. Wollar '587 teaches five embodiments of a fastener device 10, 110, 210, 310, and 410. Each fastener device has a hollow expandable body member 20, including a body shank 24, a body head 26, and a plurality of legs 28, that is insertable into aligned panel apertures 12 and 14. The legs 28 are separated by an axially extending slot 30. Each fastener device also includes a cylindrical bore 34 extending axially through the body head 26, the body shank 24, and between the legs 28. The diameter of the body member 20 is smaller than the diameter of the aligned apertures 12 and 14. *Wollar '587*, col. 3, lines 56-63; col. 4, lines 3-46; and col. 5, lines 31-34.

The Examiner on page 4 of the Office action characterizes the body shank 24 as comparable to the slotted-link section of Claim 1. However, the body shank 24 has a

constant diameter or width, and therefore the body member 20 does not have “[a] shank forming a dowel having a constant diameter larger than a width of the elongated hole,” as required by Claim 1.

Hoyle does not cure the deficiencies of Funaki and Wollar ‘587. Hoyle teaches a sliding grommet 10 for mounting in an elongated hole 32, the grommet 10 including a head flange 12, a shank portion 21, a pair of Y-shaped members 40, and a reinforcing rib 48. The shank portion 21 includes a flared out upper section 26 (see sloping bore 36) and a cylindrical lower portion 29. The upper section 26 includes shoulders 30 for engaging the upper and lower edges of an elongated hole 32. *Hoyle*, col. 4, lines 13-53; and Figs. 1, 3, and 4.

Therefore, Hoyle does not teach “[a] shank forming a dowel having a constant diameter larger than a width of the elongated hole,” as required by Claim 1.

For these and other reasons, Funaki, Wollar ‘587, and Hoyle, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by amended independent Claim 1. Therefore, independent Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2-7 are allowable.

Dependent Claims 2-6

Claims 2-6 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Funaki in view of Wollar ‘587 and Hoyle.

Claims 2-6 depend from Claim 1 and are therefore allowable for the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 1. In addition, Claims 2-6 also recite additional patentable subject matter.

Dependent Claim 7

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Funaki in view of Wollar '587 and Hoyle and in further view of United States Patent No. 4,726,722 (Wollar '722).

Wollar '722 does not cure the deficiencies of Funaki, Wollar '587, and Hoyle. Wollar '722 teaches a two-piece reusable plastic fastener 10 including a hollow body 12 having a body head 24, a body shank 26, and a bore 32. The body shank 26 includes three shank portions 28, 30, and 31. Body shank portion 28 also includes locking tabs 54, projections 56, and free ends 58. Body shank portion 28 has a diameter that is larger than a diameter of body shank portion 30. Body shank portion 31 extends from body shank portion 30 into a point 34. In use, body 12 is inserted into a hole 20 of a panel 16 such that shank portion 28 enters hole 20. *Wollar '722*, col. 3, lines 38-40; col. 4, lines 1-5 and 41-55; col. 5, lines 1-3; and Figs. 1 and 6.

The Examiner asserts that the free ends 58 are the slotted-link sections recited in the claims and that the shank portion 28 is the dowel of the claims. The shank portion 28 is inserted into hole 20 and has a diameter smaller than a diameter of the hole 20. Even if the Examiner's assertions were correct, Wollar '722 does not teach "[a] shank forming a dowel having a constant diameter larger than a width of [an] elongated hole," as required by Claim 1.

For these and other reasons, Funaki, Wollar '587, Hoyle, and Wollar '722, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by amended independent Claim 1. Claim 7 depends from Claim 1 and is allowable for the same reasons and also because Claim 7 recites additional patentable subject matter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 1-7 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig J. Loest", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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